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President's Committee on the Equality of Treatment  
and Opportunity in the Armed Forces

USE OF THE COMMITTEE ONLY

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

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Dear Mr. Fahy:

I have your letter of 5 April, asking me to appear on 26 April before the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. I have considered your invitation very carefully. Quite frankly, I feel that an appearance before your group on 26 April would be premature, on the one hand, and unprofitable, on the other, for I have not yet had time to inform myself adequately on the details of this difficult problem. However, on 6 April I addressed a memorandum to the three Secretaries, which set forth a broad initial statement of policy. At the same time, I directed each of the three Departments to do two things: (a) "To examine its present practices and determine what forward steps can and should be made in the light of this policy and in view of Executive Order 9981 dated 26 July 1948;" and (b) to state "in writing its detailed implementation of the general policy." I further directed that these written statements should be submitted to the Chairman of the Personnel Policy Board, Office of the Secretary of Defense, not later than 1 May 1949.

It is my intention to have these statements reviewed by the Personnel Policy Board to determine their adequacy. It is also my intention to have the Personnel Policy Board restudy our initial statement of policy together with the statements of the Departments in order to determine whether or not that policy may be strengthened or otherwise improved.

For the information of your Committee, I am enclosing a copy of my 6 April memorandum to the three Secretaries on the subject of "Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services."

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Louis Johnson

Enclosure

Mr. Charles Fahy, Chairman  
The President's Committee on Equality of  
Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services  
Washington, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

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6 April 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
CHAIRMAN, PERSONNEL POLICY BOARD

SUBJECT: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services

1. a. It is the policy of the National Military Establishment that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

b. To assist in achieving uniform application of this policy, the following supplemental policies are announced:

(1) To meet the requirements of the Services for qualified individuals, all personnel will be considered on the basis of individual merit and ability and must qualify according to the prescribed standards for enlistment, attendance at schools, promotions, assignment to specific duties, etc.

(2) All individuals, regardless of race, will be accorded equal opportunity for appointment, advancement, professional improvement, promotion and retention in their respective components of the National Military Establishment.

(3) Some units may continue to be manned with Negro personnel; however, all Negroes will not necessarily be assigned to Negro units. Qualified Negro personnel shall be assigned to fill any type of position, vacancy in organizations or overhead installations without regard to race.

2. Each Department is directed to examine its present practices and determine what forward steps can and should be made

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in the light of this policy and in view of Executive Order 9981, dated July 26, 1948, which directs that this policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible with due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.

3. Following the completion of this study, each Department shall state, in writing, its own detailed implementation of the general policy stated herein and such supplemental policies as may be determined by each Service to meet its own specific needs. These statements shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Personnel Policy Board, Office of the Secretary of Defense, not later than 1 May 1949.

/s/ Louis Johnson